

The complaint

Mr H and Mrs T have complained about the service they've received from Ageas Insurance Limited ("Ageas") following a claim for an escape of water.

Any references to Ageas in this decision include its appointed agents.

What happened

Mr H and Mrs T made a claim in September 2024 following an escape of water at their property, caused by a leak from a pipe connected to the boiler.

Ageas arranged for a site inspection to take place and alternative accommodation was recommended due to Mrs T's medical condition, as the remedial works would cause dust at the property which would likely worsen her symptoms.

So Ageas asked Mrs T to find some suitable accommodation for it to review. By mid-November 2024 a suitable property still hadn't been found, due either to Ageas finding the prices too high, or the properties being taken off the market. Mr H and Mrs T moved into a hotel so that works could commence.

A property became available on 24 November 2024 and Mr H and Mrs T moved out of the hotel. By mid-December the property still wasn't dry and there was now an issue with the conservatory roof leaking. Ageas confirmed this was unrelated to the original escape of water and Mr H and Mrs T had the roof repaired.

A cash settlement was offered in February 2025 for the outstanding work. Mr H and Mrs T weren't happy with the settlement amount as they believed the kitchen units couldn't be refitted and Ageas said they could. It asked for evidence that they were damaged, but Mrs T says she couldn't provide this at the time, as the units were in storage.

In mid-March the claim settlement and two further months of alternative accommodation costs were paid. But Mr H and Mrs T made a complaint, saying Ageas had caused delays in its handling of the claim, not given a fair settlement and had refused to fit new kitchen units despite saying it would.

In its response to the complaint, Ageas said the settlement amount was fair, but after referring their complaint to this Service, Ageas acknowledged an avoidable delay of three months in sourcing alternative accommodation. So for this it offered £275 compensation. Mr H and Mrs T didn't accept Ageas's offer and asked this Service to review the complaint.

Our Investigator considered what had happened and didn't think Ageas's offer was reasonable. He recommended it increase the compensation and also pay an additional disbursement allowance. Mr H and Mrs T didn't agree with our Investigator's assessment and so the complaint has been referred to me for an Ombudsman's decision.

What I've decided – and why

I've considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what's fair and reasonable

in the circumstances of this complaint.

As this is an informal service, I'm not going to respond here to every point raised or comment on every piece of evidence Mr H, Mrs T and Ageas have provided. Instead, I've focused on those I consider to be key or central to the issues in dispute. But I would like to reassure both parties that I have considered everything submitted. And having done so, I'm upholding this complaint. I'll explain why.

Firstly, I've seen insufficient evidence that the settlement amount offered wasn't a fair reflection of the outstanding work needed. I've seen the priced scope of works and it appears to cover the work required and is broadly in line with the cash settlement offer that was made. It's unfortunate that there was a further leak which was unrelated to the claim and not covered by the policy, but which caused further damage to Mr H and Mrs T's home. But this in itself doesn't make the settlement offer for the insured works unfair.

Whilst I can see Ageas originally acknowledged the delays it caused in sourcing alternative accommodation, I don't think it fully considered the impact of this – particularly on Mrs T who would be considered a vulnerable customer given her long-term medical condition. Ageas has agreed to the increased compensation and increased disturbance allowance, and I think both recommendations by our Investigator are fair.

I say this because Ageas said it paid for Mr H and Mrs T's breakfasts, but these cost only £5.95 per guest per day at their hotel – and our current approach is that an allowance of at least £15 per day per adult is more likely to cover reasonable additional costs. So I'm going to require Ageas to pay the difference in line with our Investigator's recommendations.

Mr H and Mrs T have said the compensation increase isn't enough. But I've seen no additional evidence or information which makes me think they've been impacted to the extent that £500 compensation wouldn't be reasonable to reflect their circumstances. This amount is in line with the level of compensation I'd award if no offer had been made, to recognise the impact of the avoidable delays on Mr H and Mrs T, and particularly their health.

I've also considered the photos Mrs T has provided of the kitchen units. Whilst I can see some damage in the photos, it's not clear whether this damage was pre-existing or caused by the escape of water. It seems possible that it was claim-related damage. But in some of the photos the units have marks which I think could be cleaned.

As Ageas hasn't seen the photo evidence, I'm not going to require Ageas to pay for new units at the moment. I do think however, that Mr H and Mrs T should send the photos to Ageas for its comments and consideration. And once the units are refitted, if there's any evidence that they've been damaged by the escape of water and – for example – don't fit properly or are showing signs of warping or irreparable water damage, then Mr H and Mrs T can approach Ageas about this and I'd expect it to consider this aspect of their claim further.

Putting things right

Ageas Insurance Limited should increase the compensation for distress and inconvenience it's caused for this complaint to £500 in total.

It should also pay the difference in disturbance allowance between the amount it paid Mr H and Mrs T for daily breakfasts, and what I consider to be a fair allowance of £15 per adult per day, for the duration of Mr H and Mrs T's hotel stay. To this amount it should add interest at a rate of 8% per annum simple, from the date Ageas paid the breakfast allowance until the date of settlement.

My final decision

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint and I direct Ageas Insurance Limited to put things right as I've set out above.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr H and Mrs T to accept or reject my decision before 28 January 2026.

Ifrah Malik
Ombudsman